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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests: forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments (programme element II.e)

Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments

Note by the Secretariat

Programme element II.e was not discussed by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests at its third session and is not covered in the report of the Forum on that session (E/CN.17/IFF/1999/25). Accordingly, section II.F of the report of the Forum on its second session (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14) is reproduced in the annex in order to facilitate discussion of this programme element at the fourth session of the Forum.

* E/CN.17/IFF/2000/1

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Annex

Extract from section II of the report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its second session*

F. Forest-related work of international and regional organizations and under existing instruments (programme element II.e (i) and II.e (ii))

Preliminary conclusions

1. The Forum emphasized that Governments, international organizations and all interested parties should take a holistic approach to forest matters, which recognizes the importance of social, economic and environmental values and functions of forests, and use their comparative advantages to cooperate in support of management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

2. The Forum noted that many of the IPF proposals for action are directed towards international organizations and instruments, and that there is significant unrealized potential for further strengthening and mobilizing the capacity of existing international and regional organizations and instruments to support and promote the goal of management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. This can be achieved through the enhancement of their complementarities, the provision of financial resources, better coordination and facilitation of the policy dialogue, and greater coherence of action, including consistent policy guidance at the level of their governing bodies. This approach would help to focus collective action on overall priorities. There is a need to encourage the forging of partnerships with other international and regional organizations and instruments to implement the IPF proposals for action directed towards them.

3. The Forum recognized the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests as a successful informal partnership in initiating and strengthening forest-related collaboration among organizations within and outside the United Nations in support of the IPF proposals for action. The Task Force requires strong support from each of its member organizations. The strengthening of the work of the Task Force will facilitate the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The Task Force should continue to practise coordination on an informal basis with respect to the implementation of IPF proposals for action directed towards its member organizations.

4. The Forum acknowledged that in the context of the implementation of the IPF proposals for action, the real challenges ahead lie in further strengthening the existing partnerships among Task Force members and other international and regional organizations and instruments in respect of facilitating the establishment of new modalities of cooperation between Task Force members and other partners for making the best use of all the available forest-related institutional capabilities that exist at the regional and international levels. In this regard, through national forest programmes, special attention should be paid to supporting efforts of countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, towards sustainable forest management.

5. The Forum underlined that the IPF proposals for action as a whole constitute an important integrated and multisectoral approach for the achievement of the sustainable forest management of all types of forests. Complementary objectives and approaches on forest-related issues for promoting work among institutions, organizations and instruments are

* E/CN.17/IFF/1998/14.

crucial to improving efficiency and coordination, which should be built upon the IPF proposals for action. Future efforts by international organizations, multilateral institutions and instruments should be flexible in order to accommodate the existing and emerging needs as well as different levels of social and economic development of countries, in particular developing countries. The Forum also encouraged them to provide for the effective participation of and collaboration with all interested parties.

6. The Forum recognized the utility of designing a comprehensive Directory of forest-related international and regional organizations including information regarding relevant global and regional conventions. The Directory could include, *inter alia*, the available institutional information concerning missions, mandates, organizational structures, programmes, activities, personnel and budget, as well as information on collaborative forest-related work and activities of organizations and institutions. The Directory should be updated on a regular basis. FAO, in cooperation with other member organizations of the Task Force, could have a leading role. Additional information about bilateral and multilateral forest-related activities, private sector and research institutions and selected publications could also be included, as provided by the parties involved in such activities. It is suggested that such a Directory be made accessible to all Governments and other interested parties in electronic form, for example, on the Internet.

7. The Forum emphasized that success of the efforts being undertaken by various United Nations bodies on forest-related issues depends on addressing the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable forest management in the context of sustainable development, in a balanced manner. It was also noted that the specific conditions of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in terms of financial, technical and technological capabilities require particular attention. Inter-agency coordination should pay special attention to integrating the needs of developing countries with low forest cover in relevant policies and programmes.

8. With respect to the Forum programme of work under category II.e, according to which it is to "Consider forest-related work of international and regional organizations. Further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps", the Forum noted that the Secretariat's documentation provided useful input to deliberations in the Forum regarding issues to be dealt with under category III.

9. The Forum noted that in future it will be necessary to examine practical approaches based on results expected to be achieved and to focus on experiences gained in the implementation of existing instruments and the work programmes of international and regional organizations oriented towards achieving sustainable forest management.

Preliminary proposals

10. The Forum called upon all interested parties, including the governing bodies of relevant international and regional organizations and instruments, to:

(a) Identify practical means for mobilizing their diverse strengths and capabilities to support country-level efforts in implementing the proposals for action adopted by IPF, taking into account the need to enhance the active participation of all parties concerned;

(b) Foster synergies among different international and regional organizations and instruments, and encourage their active participation in and contribution to international forest policy dialogue, with due consideration to the Forest Principles, chapter 11 of Agenda 21 and the IPF/Forum proposals for action;

(c) Clarify the respective roles and work to be carried out by international and regional organizations and instruments with respect to the forest-related programmes of action of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its follow-up.

11. The Forum called upon Governments to:

(a) Utilize, as appropriate, the expertise provided by international and regional organizations and instruments in the formulation of their national forest programmes, in particular to better integrate cross-sectoral linkages and the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable forest management into national policies;

(b) Establish and strengthen, as appropriate, effective national arrangements to provide coordinated and effective guidance to multilateral organizations.

12. The Forum called upon the secretariats of the Task Force member organizations to:

(a) Inform their governing bodies about the progress and outcome of the IPF/Forum process so as to strengthen their forest-related activities and their inter-agency cooperation in this regard;

(b) Explore and develop the potential for institutional synergies with other partners, especially with regional development banks, regional commissions and other regional intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, other international organizations and private sector institutions;

(c) Cooperate towards developing a comprehensive Directory of forest-related international and regional organizations and instruments engaged in forest-related activities, including their mandates, missions, organizational structures, programmes, activities, personnel and budget, as well as information on collaborative forest-related work and activities of organizations and instruments. The Directory should be updated on a regular basis. FAO, in cooperation with other member organizations of the Task Force, could have a leading role in this task.

13. The Forum called upon Governments to provide guidance to the governing bodies of international and regional organizations and instruments, and to encourage non-governmental organizations to cooperate in:

(a) Implementing activities to increase public awareness of the direct and indirect benefits derived from forests, at national, subregional, regional and global levels;

(b) Facilitating inter-institutional consultation on cross-sectoral forest policies, policy reforms, and planning and programmes for sustainable forest management;

(c) Enhancing cost-effective data systems, to allow the preparation and the timely dissemination of information on progress in sustainable forest management.

14. The Forum called upon relevant international and regional organizations and instruments to consider, in their relevant policies and programmes, the needs and requirements of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, with special attention to low forest cover countries.

15. The Forum urged international and regional organizations and governing bodies of instruments to support forest programmes and to integrate forest-related aspects in programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, decreasing population pressures, promoting food security and promoting environmental awareness.

16. Consistent with the programme of work under element II.e, which is to "further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations

and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps", the Forum requested the Forum secretariat to provide to the Forum at its third session an in-depth analysis of the experiences with implementation, compliance and achievements of forest-related work under existing instruments and by international organizations, as well as an in-depth analysis of the contributions that could be made by regional and international voluntary initiatives, for example, on criteria and indicators, to achieving sustainable forest management, as a way to contribute to building further consensus in future sessions. In this regard, the Forum secretariat was advised to seek assistance from secretariats of existing instruments and other appropriate sources. The analysis should include information on actions to support sustainable forest management as well as the extent of international cooperation, including levels of financial support. The analysis should also include:

(a) Coherence of forest-related objectives and policies among existing instruments and effectiveness in their implementation;

(b) The degree of effectiveness of international cooperation to support forest-related work;

(c) The nature and magnitude of demands by the existing instruments on national institutions as well as existing national capacities to respond to these demands;

(d) Action-oriented proposals to meet the specific needs and requirements of developing countries, in particular those with low forest cover;

(e) Establishment of ways and mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness.